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CSO INVOLVEMNET IN THE PRSP PROCESS: A CASE FOR UGANDA 2002

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THE PRSP PROCESS AND CSO PARTICIPATION IN UGANDA

Abstract

Civil society in Africa has for the most part remained marginal to serious policy discussions on global financial issues, both at national and at international levels. There has been relatively little engagement between civil society organizations (CSOs) in Africa and key decision makers in the global financial arena such as multilateral agencies and governments. The main exception to this general rule relates, not surprisingly, to debt issues. Civil society networks on debt relief have been active in a number of African countries, including Angola, Cameroon, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Often these and other civil society groups have also addressed policies of structural adjustment that the two Bretton Woods institutions (BWIs) have prescribed in response to debt and development problems in Africa.

This paper analyses one case of African civil society engagement with the debt crisis and structural adjustment. It examines the involvement of CSOs in Uganda in the formulation of the 2000 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), as required by the IMF and the World Bank before a country can access debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The case of the PRSP process in Uganda shows how CSOs can influence policy planning at the macro level.

In examining civil society participation in the preparation of the PRSP in Uganda, the chapter analyses broader issues including achievements, opportunities and challenges faced by CSOs. The chapter then looks at the future prospects for broader participation by Uganda CSOs and offers insights into critical issues of policy analysis, advocacy for increased social spending, and more. The chapter concludes that the Ugandan experience of CSO involvement with the PRSP presents important lessons that can be utilized in other HIPC countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia.